

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
Basic Officer Course  
The Basic School  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5019

B0319.2

## **MARINE BATTLE SKILLS TRAINING 3: CONTINUING ACTIONS**

### **Student Handout**

1. **Definition.** Continuing actions are those activities that remain in place throughout any military operation, and as such contribute to minimizing the amount of "friction" a unit imposes on itself.

2. **Weapons and Equipment Maintenance**

a. The integration of weapons maintenance into the unit's SOP is imperative if weapons are to function properly for an extended period of time and if maintenance problems are to be spotted prior to firing the final protective fires! The unit SOP is nothing more than a bunch of paper if it goes unsupervised in the field or in garrison. Continuing actions are a barometer of who is supervising their Marines and who is not. Usually, units that have little self imposed friction owe it to NCOs and SNCOs that are constantly executing the sixth step in troop leading: SUPERVISE.

b. Reference the following student handouts for more detailed information on individual weapons maintenance: B2103, B2105, B2109, B2111, B2121, and your M-16A2 Technical Manual.

3. **Supply Discipline**

a. All unit leaders must ensure that their Marines have ample ammunition and that these rounds are being constantly redistributed throughout tactical operations. Furthermore, if ammunition is running short and resupply is "enroute," ensure that the next higher unit understands what the round count actually is since this will directly impact the commander's ability to commit his unit to sustained combat. Ammunition that the unit stores or carries needs to be maintained in a serviceable condition and in a location where it can be accessed in a rapid manner so as to facilitate resupply.

b. Unit leaders must have a clear picture of the chow and water situation within the unit. This information is vital since the tempo of the operations may be greatly affected by these factors. Likewise, unit leaders need to have specific knowledge regarding the quantity of chow and water their Marines possess in order to be able to request resupply at the appropriate time. Contingency plans should be made prior to debarking shipping for both resupply and purification of water depending on the local situation. Questions such as "is it drinkable for Americans" and "do we have iodine tablets" may wind up being just as important as "where is the enemy." Water and chow sustain Marines in the field and close attention to these variables is important for sustaining combat operations in the field.

4. **Communication Discipline**

- a. STAY OFF THE RADIO---Send only required traffic.
- b. Use only authorized call signs and procedures (i.e., no Alpha six, Alpha five, etc., as these tend to "label" a unit by its manner of communication).
- c. Use consistent and appropriate encryption and authentication.
- d. Reference the following student handouts for more detailed information: B2501, B2502, B2504.

5. **Field Hygiene**

a. The designation of "head" areas, water drawing areas, bathing areas and trash collection points will be important if a unit is to stay away from dysentery, malaria and rodent problems.

b. Trash collection is a particularly important facet of life in the field. Actions in Vietnam and El Salvador have shown us that our enemies are extremely creative in using the trash we leave on the battlefield as either parts of booby-traps or containers for other explosives. Therefore, unless we desire to assist our enemies in accomplishing their missions, we should not leave one bit of trash at either a position on which we consolidate or in a defensive position.

- c. Reference BST 09.26/7/8, FM 21-10, FM 21-75.

6. **Tactical Actions.** Tactical continuing actions are many and varied, but there are several that apply to almost every military operation that we will undertake. Dispersion, cover, concealment, security, camouflage and noise discipline are but a few. These actions are the backbone of all successful tactical evolutions, for you will see some operations that use these and succeed. You will not see any operation succeed that fails to employ them unless due to an inept enemy. Like all continuing actions, these actions reflect sharply upon the tactical ability of the leaders of any unit and the discipline of that unit's Marines.

7. **Casualty Evacuation.** The process of evaluation and evacuation is an extremely important one as morale may be adversely affected by its poor handling (95% of all casualties that reached a hospital in Vietnam survived and were sent home to the United States). The handling of casualties moves through several stages and begins with "self-aid" and "buddy-aid" which is administered on the spot by the casualty and whoever is closest to him. The process then moves to the platoon corpsman who will **TRIAGE** (Triage: The evaluation and classification of casualties for purposes of treatment and evacuation. It consists of the immediate sorting of patients according to type and seriousness of injury, likelihood of survival, and the establishment of priority for treatment and evacuations to assure the greatest benefit of medical care to the largest number). The next step is to move the most serious cases to the company aid station. At the company aid station the senior company corpsman will again triage the casualties and assign them a priority for evacuation. Transportation may be requested either in the form of a helicopter or a vehicle depending on the tactical situation and what is feasible at that particular moment. Once the casualty departs the company area, he is destined for either the battalion aid station or a naval vessel with the appropriate medical facilities, again depending upon the phase of the operation that the casualty was taken. Reference student handout B8604.

8. **Air Defense.** In the Korean Conflict, the U.S. Air Force lost 544 planes to small arms and machine gun fire. This was almost five times the number lost in all air-to-air combat. In South Vietnam, U.S. forces lost 410 fixed wing and 2100 helicopters to small arms fire. Small arms air defense is a necessary skill for every unit since the successful employment of these tactics will result in a direct decrease of the number of friendly casualties we incur and a proportional increase in the enemy's casualties.

a. Psychological awareness

(1) Expect air attacks and prepare for them by establishing air sentinels and assigning sectors of observation.

(2) Maximize the use of cover and concealment in all movement and position selection in order to avoid being acquired from the air.

b. Early warning

(1) Prior to commencing any operation the unit should be provided the air defense condition for that area assigned by the senior air agency. The Air Defense conditions are:

(a) RED: air attack imminent or in progress

(b) YELLOW: air attack probable or likely

(c) WHITE: air attack not likely

(2) Set up a unit signal for air attack/sighting ensuring that it is easily recognizable and passed to all members of the unit.

c. Fight back

(1) The "Hard Kill" is the desired outcome when any aircraft dares to inflict damage on the men who occupy the ground.

(2) If a "Hard Kill" is not obtained, the next best result is to drive the aircraft higher and thereby decrease his accuracy.

(3) In both of the above cases the key to success is the volume of fire or "metal density" of the air. Remember, "UNCOORDINATED FIRES ARE A WASTE OF AMMUNITION."

d. Rules of engagement

(1) Immediately engage all attacking enemy aircraft, helos positively identified as hostile and aircraft you see friendly air defense units engaging.

(2) Engage hostile jet aircraft not attacking your position only after ordered to do so.

(3) Friend or Foe---be SURE before you fire. Drill your Marines on aircraft and vehicle recognition as a matter of routine.

e. Firing back

(1) Aiming point method: The unit leader selects a point ahead of the aircraft and begins to fire as the aircraft approaches, with the rest of the unit joining in on the general deflection and elevation. Remember "metal density" is our goal and not accuracy. SHOOT HIM DOWN OR DRIVE HIM OFF, BUT TAKE POSITIVE ACTION! IF HE'S ALLOWED TO LEAVE WHEN HE WANTS, IT COULD BE VERY BAD FOR YOU! See Figure 1.

<u>Aircraft</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Aim Point</u>
Jet	Crossing	2 football fields in front of the nose.
Jet	Overhead	2 football fields in front of the nose.
Jet	Directly at you	Slightly above the nose
Helo	Crossing	1/2 football field in front of the nose.
Helo	Hovering	Slightly above the helo body
Helo	Directly at you	Slightly above the helo body

Figure 1.

(2) Reference point method: This method is usually applied in the defense or when a unit is stationary for a brief period of time. The leader selects and points out several Target Reference Points (TRP) and ensures the unit is informed of them. As the aircraft approaches the TRP, he announces the TRP in a fire command and the unit fires on order. Unit members will raise their weapons to approximately a 45 degree angle over the TRP and fire until the aircraft flies through the TRP and then cease fire. See Figure 2.

Figure 2.

## 9. Steps for Handling Prisoners of War

a. General. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in the fall of 1939, Adolf Hitler issued an order that directed his armies to execute all captured political commissars of the Red Army. This became known as the "Commissar Decree." The overall effect of this decree, although selectively implemented, was to create an environment that was not conducive for Red Army soldiers to surrender and become prisoners of war. This forced many men and women who had no affection for the

Communist government to nonetheless fight for it because surrender was completely out of the question; and overall, to create a "fight to the last man" mentality among the Soviet soldiers. This was also the case in the closing days of the war when many German soldiers headed for the West in order to surrender to the humane treatment of the Allies. Therefore, the creation of an environment in which soldiers of any nation feel that they can lay down their arms and still be treated justly and have hope for the future is a tactical concern as it will have a direct effect on where the individual soldier sets his "culminating point."

b. **SEARCH EPWs**

(1) Take the EPW's weapon before beginning the search. Have one Marine guard the EPW while you search him. **DO NOT** get between the EPW and the guard at any time. If the EPW is lying on the ground when you approach, proceed cautiously then lie next to him to roll him over, keeping him between you and a possible grenade, weapon, etc., concealed under him.

(2) Have the EPW spread-eagle against a wall or a tree, or get into a push-up position with his knees on the ground.

(3) Search EPW from head to toe, looking in pockets, pouches, or containers; pat search all other areas.

(4) Take weapons and papers except identification papers and protective masks.

(5) Give a written receipt for any property taken.

(6) Tag personal property and documents to identify which prisoners had them. Provide the following information on a piece of paper or a tag: Type equipment/document, date/time of capture, place of capture (grid coordinate), capturing unit, circumstances of capture, and from which EPW information was taken.

c. **SEGREGATE** EPWs into the following four groups: commissioned officers, noncommissioned officers, enlisted personnel, civilian combatants. Also, separate the violent or aggressive types.

d. **SILENCE** EPWs

(1) Perform this step throughout the entire process of EPW handling.

(2) **DO NOT** let EPWs talk to each other. This will prevent planning for escape, etc. The use of a gag, tape, etc., may be necessary.

e. **SPEED** EPWs to the rear and turn them and any captured gear over to your leader as soon as possible so that they can be transported to the interrogation area.

f. **SAFEGUARD** EPWs

(1) Do not allow anyone to abuse prisoners.

(2) Protect prisoners from the hazards of enemy fire.

(3) Do not allow anyone to give EPWs food, water, or cigarettes unless authorized by the assigned interrogator.

g. Tag EPWs

(1) Write the following information on the EPW tag or a piece of paper: date and time of capture, place of capture (grid coordinate), capturing unit (complete unit identification, i.e., 3d Plt, Co C, 1/5) and the circumstances of capture.

(2) Tie tag securely around the prisoner's neck or arm if his hands are tied behind his back.

